

Updates From Tuckernuck

May 14 - June 8, 2026

Maria Pisciotta, Coastal Steward

I've now been on Tuckernuck for four weeks, and it's been a great start to the season. It's been exciting to watch the weather warm up, things start to change, and to get to know the island and its places. The beaches have been relatively quiet so far, aside from the gulls, and I'm looking forward to seeing what the rest of the season brings.



Great Black-backed Gull chick resting in a Horseshoe crab shell



Brood of 4 Piping Plover chicks One day old



Piping Plover chick 12 days old

While a couple of Piping Plover nests were wiped out, likely by stormy weather at the end of May, most nests prevailed. A few chicks have been roaming around Whale Point since then, from a couple of different nests, and there are still two nests with eggs and very protective parents. Once they hatch, the chicks can be remarkably difficult to spot, blending almost perfectly into the sand. I often see one pair of chicks running along the lagoon, but they are easy to miss if I'm not looking carefully enough. Their camouflage is so effective that they seem to disappear into the beach.

Currently, there are nine active Oystercatcher nests, seven of which already have chicks running, or rather hiding, around. When I'm not too close, I can sometimes watch the parents walking with their chicks, showing them where and how to find food. Most of the time, though, the parents spot me first, and the chicks immediately go into hiding. Their favorite strategy is pretty simple, they plop down where they are and stay perfectly still, relying on their camouflage to blend into the sand and dried seaweed.



American Oystercatcher chick One day old



Roseate and Common Terns on Bigelow's Point

Bigelow's Point has been a host for a colony of Roseate Terns and Common Terns. Dick V and I have been spending time watching and counting them bring in fish, as they use this area to feed. Some notable visitors among them have been two one-year-old Artic Terns, a Black Tern, and a Royal Tern.

At Whale Point, a colony of at least 300 Least Terns is currently nesting. Many of the birds are incubating eggs, and their nests can be difficult to spot among the sand. If you're visiting the area, be aware, the fencing should encompass the colony, but the terns cover a big area and don't always read the signs.



Common Loon



Sunrise



Least Tern carrying sand lance



Least Tern